#154
December 2025

The CRAZY WISDOM Monthly

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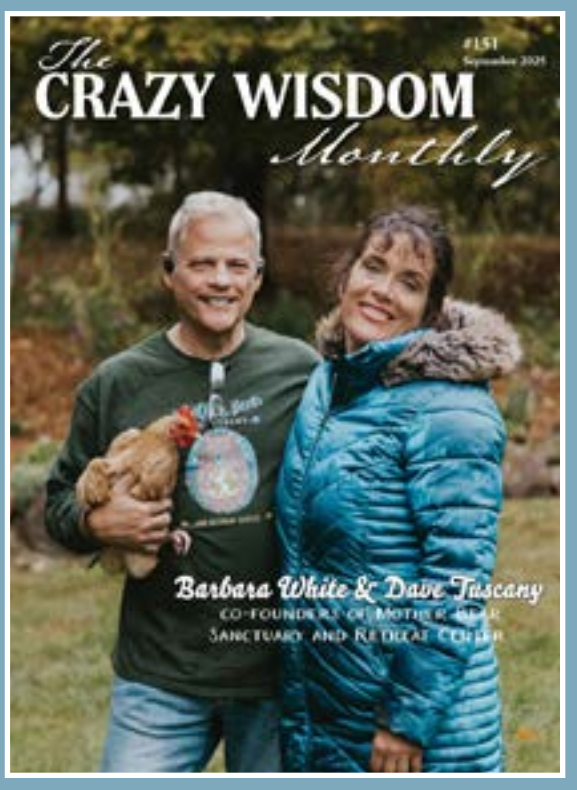

NEW articles and personal essays, **NEW** event listings, and **NEW** author, artist, and musician interviews, it's the best of Crazy Wisdom RIGHT AT YOUR FINGERTIPS!

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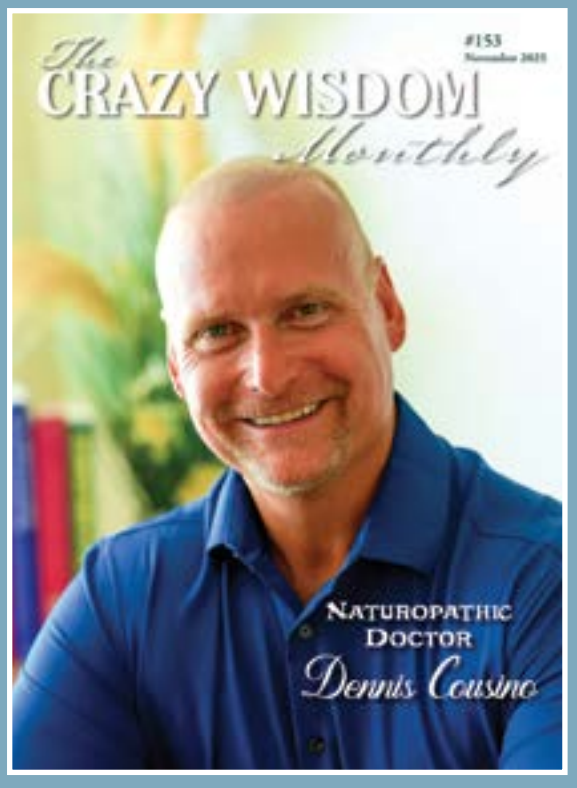

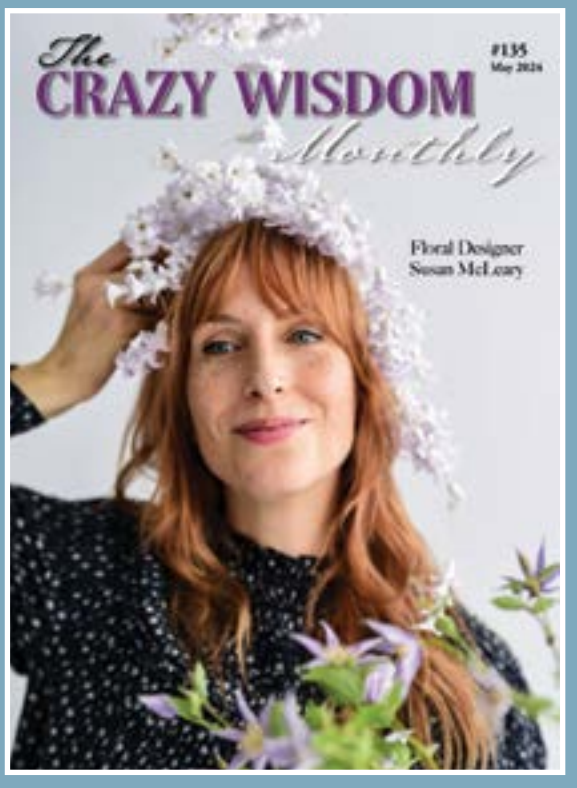

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Born during the pandemic, *The Crazy Wisdom Monthly* seeks to represent the voices of our community in a timely and entertaining manner. We welcome articles, interviews, recipes, wisdom, personal essays, poetry, breathing exercises, beautiful art and photos, favorite places for walks, news announcements, or musings on current events. Send your submission to Jennifer@crazywisdom.net.

Word of the Month

Lexiophilia

The love of words; the art of collecting words

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The Crazy Wisdom Community Journal

issue 92

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Health Coaches Support Healthy Change

From Our Current Issue

By Laura Lyjack

In conventional medicine most people turn to a doctor first when they have a health concern. While doctors can play an important role in diagnosing and treating disease, they are just one player on the larger health care team. While a physician takes the lead on testing, medications, and treatments more often than not, lifestyle changes in addition to medications and treatments, are crucial to regaining good health.

However, a lifestyle change often takes effort and patience, and it's far too easy to backslide into bad old habits. One proven way to successfully integrate those new healthy habits is to get the help of a health coach. It is becoming more common to find health coaches working both independently and in tandem with physicians in both conventional and alternative practices.

"Doctors can recommend behavior changes that improve health but they rarely can provide long-term education and support", said Benjamin Ketcherside, an assistant professor of nursing and a health coach with a master's degree in lifestyle health science and coaching. Like many coaches, he works online with clients in many different locations. Typical lifestyle changes might include better nutrition, more exercise, stress reduction, improved sleep, or elimination of harmful substances like tobacco or excessive alcohol consumption.

"Health coaching supports patients' buy-in to healthy change rather than just giving them orders," he explained. Health coaching borrows from psychology and counseling, and it focuses on positive behavior change. "It helps clients identify goals, strengths, and resources. It also provides an accountability partner."

Ketcherside is especially interested in the way coaching supports lifestyle changes for people with chronic health conditions such as diabetes and heart disease. He cites studies that show that about 50 percent of patients fail to follow through on the lifestyle changes recommended by their doctors. However, with the support of a health coach their success rates go up to 70 or 80 percent.

Just what is a health coach?

Health coaches can come from a variety of different professions and backgrounds. They most commonly include nurses, nutritionist or dieticians, and physical therapist as well as yoga and exercise instructors.

But what makes them all health coaches, is specific training in guiding and motivating others to make change. Along with training, many coaches are certified by third party agencies that set guidelines for education and experience.

Probably the largest and best-known of these certifying agencies is the National Board for Health and Wellness Coaching (NBHWC). Other certifying agencies include the National Society of Health Coaches (NSHC), American Council on Exercise (ACE) and Institute for Integrative Nutrition (IIN).

Health coach training varies based on the certifying agency and from one training program to the next but nearly always includes training in the foundations of good health (diet, exercise, stress management, sleep, minimizing unhealthy substances, and maintaining good social connections) along with practical strategies for motivating and supporting change in clients.

Where can you find a health coach?

Coaches are most often part of a larger health care team that might include a physician or alternative practitioner, a nutritionist, physical therapist, or even a behavioral health therapist. While alternative and holistic practitioners are most likely to recognize the benefits of health coaches, conventional physician practices are also beginning to bring health coaches into their practices to support patients in making lifestyle changes to control or reverse chronic conditions. hub, "By bridging the gap between the physician and patient, health coaches can help practices improve patient engagement in their care, leading to healthier patients with better outcomes."

Read the rest of the article online!

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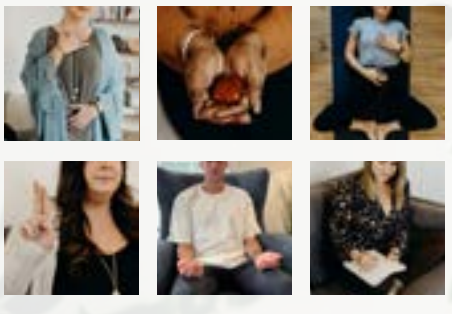

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CW Book Picks *of the month*

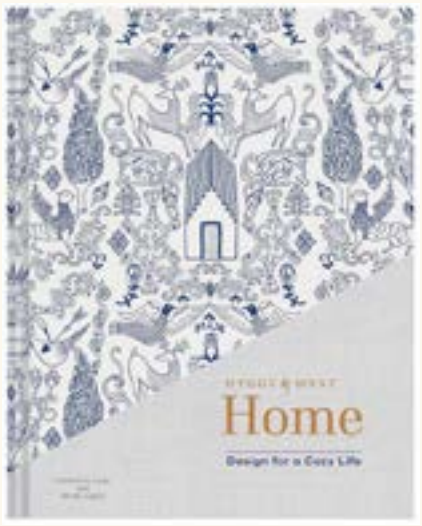
Are you ready to turn those long, dark winter months into a season you actually look forward to? Welcome to the world of hygge—the Danish tradition that's all about creating cozy spaces and nurturing your soul.

Born in the snowy streets of Denmark, hygge has been helping the Danes not just survive, but actually enjoy their freezing winters. But how can this Nordic lifestyle translate to our fast-paced, on-the-go American way of life?

Well, in Hygge for the American Home, California girl turned Parisian transplant, Meghan shares her own journey of discovering hygge after being hit with the harsh reality of European winters (spoiler: they're no joke).

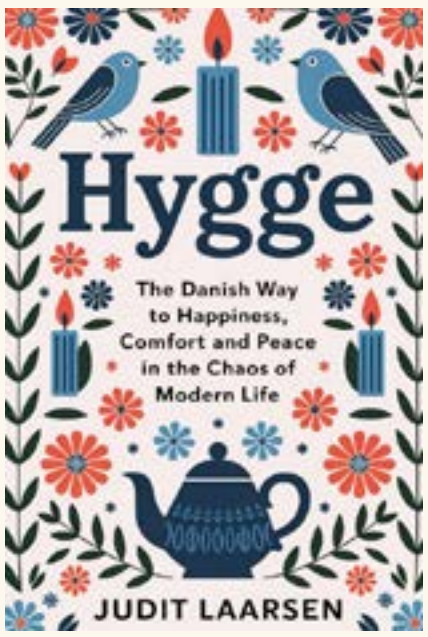
- Laugh-out-loud stories
- Practical tips
- Healthy dose of self-care

Meghan shows you how to sprinkle some hygge magic into your own life—whether that's by lighting a candle, baking your favorite treats, or embracing the art of togetherness. It's all about finding small, meaningful moments that bring you joy. So if you're ready to make your home feel like a warm hug—no matter what the weather outside is doing—grab your copy of Hygge for the American Home and start creating your own cozy sanctuary today.



Tastemakers Christiana and Aimee of Hygge & West know that the key to making a house into a home is in the decoration—whether that means embracing natural elements, creating cozy spaces, making room for family, or finding your own personal charm in every space.

Hygge & West Home offers a look into 20 covetable homes designed to promote feelings of coziness, companionship, and comfort, from an intimate apartment in San Francisco to a log cabin in Wyoming, a family home in Minneapolis, and a colorful oasis in Brooklyn. With page after page of aspirational interiors, engaging interviews with home owners, and tips on creating similar feelings in any space, this eyecatching book explores what makes a house a truly personal space and offers readers the tools and inspiration to make their home their own.



Discover the Danish Secret to Happiness That Transforms Overwhelming Modern Life into a Haven of Peace, Warmth, and Genuine Joy!

Drowning in constant busyness, feeling disconnected from yourself and loved ones, and sensing there's a simpler, more peaceful way to live despite trying countless productivity hacks and wellness trends?

Exhausted by the pressure to do more, achieve more, and be more, while your home feels like just another place you rush through rather than a sanctuary?

"Hygge: The Danish Way to Happiness, Comfort and Peace in the Chaos of Modern Life" reveals the transformative lifestyle approach that helps thousands of women worldwide find lasting peace, genuine connection, and everyday joy, while most people remain trapped in cycles of stress, perfectionism, and the exhausting pursuit of an impossible "perfect life"!

Considering a New Year's Resolution? Forget Weight Loss, Work on Posture!

From Our Blog

By Mark Thiesmeyer Hook

Thanks to the combination of a month of eating holiday treats and the annual New Year resolution ritual, January is one of the busiest times of the year for fitness professionals. For the next few months, my fitness center will be bursting with people who have decided that this is the year they're going to solve any number of things that they think are wrong with their bodies.

Most of those issues have to do with weight loss. Yes, most of us could benefit from improving our diets and dropping a few pounds. You may be tempted to make weight loss your new year mission. But this year, I have a different suggestion: make 2018 (2026!) the year you stand taller.

The Importance of Posture

Posture is the position we hold our bodies in when we're sitting or standing — and mainly thanks to modern life, most of us are doing it wrong. Just take a look around and you'll see unhealthy postures everywhere. The necks of high school and college students carrying heavy backpacks look more like the necks of turtles peeking out of their shells. In coffeehouses and offices, people hunch their shoulders over keyboards. People also frequently sit with most of their weight on one hip, leaving their shoulders uneven. Men walking down the street have both their shoulders and their guts protruding ahead of them.

I'm not singling out posture because of how it makes us look, but because of how it can make us feel.

An unhealthy posture causes pain. The bones of our spine, our vertebrae, protect our spinal cord and the nerves that control every movement and sensation in our bodies. Improper posture causes our spines to twist and bend in unnatural ways called subluxations, and subluxations in turn lead to pinched nerves.

Pinched nerves cause sensations that range from extremely painful to disturbingly weird. For example, a subluxation in one of your lower vertebrae can cause tight, painful hips, shooting pains going down your leg, or even a burning sensation in your foot. My father once had a subluxation in his neck that made him feel as though he had bugs crawling on his face!

In addition to the pain from subluxations and pinched nerves, an unhealthy posture also causes unnecessary muscular strain, which can lead to muscle damage — both of which also lead to pain.

Posture impacts our overall physical and mental health. Slumping affects your mood and energy — in fact, several studies have linked rounded shoulder posture to depression and lethargy. This happens because slouching "squishes" our lungs, making it harder to breathe deeply. A slumping posture can actually result in losing up to 30 percent of the air that should be entering your body when you inhale, which leaves you with less oxygen for creating energy and fueling your brain.

Furthermore, posture affects our sense of ourselves. According to researcher Amy Cuddy, assuming certain "power poses" (think Wonder Woman's famous stance) can actually increase confidence and lower anxiety levels by reducing the levels of cortisol in our bodies. Apparently, we have the power to change our body chemistry just by holding ourselves differently, including by keeping our spines erect. Granted, subsequent research has had mixed results replicating Cuddy's study, but no one argues that great posture increases how people perceive you.

Three Steps to a Healthier Posture

If achieving and maintaining a healthy posture was easy, mom's advice to stand up straight and hold your shoulders back would have done the trick. But we do have the power to re-train our bodies to hold a healthy posture, and here are three steps to help you do just that:

Awareness. Being aware of how we hold ourselves is the first step to doing a better job of protecting our posture and our health. Start noticing when and where you slump, round your back or shift your weight to one side. How does driving, sitting at your desk, watching TV in your favorite chair, or texting affect your posture? When you discover the areas that lead you to slumping or distributing your weight unevenly, put Post-It notes in those areas to remind you to watch and correct for healthy posture. Download an app for your smart phone or computer to remind you about your posture.

Stretch and strengthen the right muscles. Tightness in our front neck muscles, shoulders, chest and/or hip flexors can pull our spines out of alignment. Each of these muscle groups can tug your torso forward leaving you looking down at the ground. It is important to note that a tight muscle is often a weak muscle. Simply stretching these muscles may not get you dancer posture. If a muscle has an underlying weakness, it will often tighten back up in an effort to stabilize your body. So instead of stretching alone, the goal is to both stretch and strengthen the muscles responsible for holding our spines erect.

A good personal trainer — one who has been trained in proper body mechanics — can help you achieve the dual goals of stretching and strengthening your postural muscles. If your time or budget doesn't allow for a trainer at this time, though, here are a few exercises you can do safely at home.

Read the rest of the story online!

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Holiday Baking with Tea

From Our New Winter Issue!

Brunch Chai Tea Cake Recipe

By Peggy A. Alaniz

Ushered in with the crisp cool air and the gentle flutter of snowflakes, the holiday season is here. Time with friends, family, and co-workers. Gatherings with good food and drink. When planning gatherings, I always look for a balance between old favorites and something new.

People tend to like a nice cocktail or hot toddy, yet tea is much more versatile than just something to drink—it can also be used to enhance your baked goods. Using tea in your baking has become popular in the last couple of years. Cooking shows and competitions often incorporate Earl Grey and Matcha tea in recipes. Even one of the most popular music stars of the past decade (Taylor Swift), has her own sugar cookie recipe which contains chai spice.

The wonderful thing about baking with tea is that it not only gives you a unique flavor profile, but it is easy to add to your already existing recipes or store-bought baking mixes. Tea can be incorporated either directly or by infusion. Incorporating herbal tea or tisane can have challenges depending upon type. For example, hibiscus should be added after baking soda in a recipe because it can curdle dairy or soy milk. In my experience, adding vanilla prior to adding hibiscus helps as well. Two of the preferred ways to incorporate tea would be by adding it to the butter in the recipe or by steeping it in milk.

When adding tea to butter you should melt the butter in a pan and then add the tea blend to the butter. Gently stir it on low to medium heat for five minutes. After five minutes, strain and dispose of the tea solids, then either refrigerate or freeze the butter until it is a solid mass, or a soft consistency, depending upon what the recipe calls for.

When adding tea to milk, warm up the milk in your saucepan on low to medium heat until it begins to steam or boil. Remove it from the heat, then add your tea bags, allowing them to steep or sit in the hot milk for a minimum of five minutes and as long as twenty minutes, depending upon how strong of a flavor you would like. The advantage to steeping the tea in the milk is that it imparts a smooth rich flavor without bitterness or acidity.

I often think of warm spices such as ginger, cinnamon, cloves, and nutmeg when I think of holiday cooking. One of my favorite tea types, chai, incorporates all of these spices and is perfect for brunch cake. The recipe is good for a holiday gathering or if you just happen to want to try baking with tea!

Brunch Chai Tea Cake Recipe

For the Chai Spice Blend:

1 tsp. ground Allspice

1 tsp. ground cardamom

1 tsp ground cloves

1 tsp. ground nutmeg

3 tsps. ground ginger

3 tsps. ground cinnamon

For the Cake:

1 cup of milk

4 chai tea bags or 8 tablespoons of loose-leaf chai tea

¾ cup of salted butter softened

1⅔ cups of granulated sugar or 1 cup of honey

3 large eggs

2 tsps. of pure vanilla extract

¾ cup of sour cream or unflavored Greek yogurt

3 ½ cups all-purpose flour (not packed) or gluten free flour

2 ½ tsps. Baking powder

¼ tsp salt

4 tsps. Chai spice mixture

For the Crumble Topping:

1 cup of all-purpose flour or gluten free flour

1/3 cup light brown sugar

1/3 cup granulated sugar

4 tsps. Chai Spice mixture

¼ cup of finely chopped pecans (can be omitted)

½ cup salted butter melted

For the Icing:

1 cup powdered sugar

1 tsp. Chai spice

2 to 3 teaspoons of milk

Directions:

Start by combining the chai spices and blend well. Set it aside.

For the crumble topping, combine all of the dry ingredients first, then add the melted butter. Stir batter until it has been combined and set it aside. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Grease a 9” x 13” baking pan and set aside.

Heat one cup of milk to a simmer. Take off the heat and add the chai tea bags or loose-leaf chai. Steep for 10 to 20 minutes, then remove the tea bags or strain the tea solids.

While the tea is steeping you can combine the softened salted butter and granulated sugar. Beat until smooth, then add your eggs and vanilla extract. Once blended add the sour cream and blend together until smooth.

In a separate bowl combine the flour, baking powder, salt, and Chai spice mixture.

To the butter sour cream mixture, add 1 cup of your dry ingredients and mix. Then add 1/4 cup of the steeped chai milk mixture and mix. Repeat until all of the ingredients have been combined to form a nice smooth batter. Then pour the batter into the greased baking pan.

Add the crumbled topping that was made earlier to the top of the batter, pressing it in between your fingers to form clumps. Bake for 45 to 55 minutes or until a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean. Allow the cake to cool.

In a small bowl, combine the powdered sugar, remaining chai spice (approximately 1 tsp.) and milk. Drizzle the icing over the cooled cake and enjoy!

Peggy A. Alaniz is a poet and tea and travel blogger. She has been published in Chicken Soup for the Soul.

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September through December 2025

THE CRAZY WISDOM CALENDAR

Calendar edited by Kaili Brooks

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A Course in Miracles Study Group with Randall Counts: Zoom Only • Ongoing Thursdays • 7:30 to 8:30 p.m. • The focus of the group is on practical application of Course principles to daily life. There is a mix of reading passages from the text, lessons or manual for teachers, and participant sharing of experiences as relate to those passages. Donations accepted. For more information contact Randall at (517) 750-8087 or visit interfaithspirit.org.

Art and Craft

The Art, Science & Reciprocity of EcoCreativity with Robin Lily Goldberg • Monday, December 1, 8, & 15 • 6 to 7:00 p.m. • This interdisciplinary series illustrates how meaningful poems, stories, and paintings can emerge through co-creating with the Earth. We'll draw inspiration from visionary writers and artists to experience the regenerative benefits of collaborating with our environments. Everyone has creative capacities within, and everyone is welcome. $45. For more information contact Robin at robinlily@outlook.com.

Breathwork

Guided Group Breathwork with Jackie Miller • Saturday, December 7 & 21 • 6 to 7:30 p.m. • A group session of gentle, energizing breathing with music, guided by Jackie Miller, certified breathwork facilitator. Experience the power of breath energy and non-ordinary states activated by special breathing techniques. Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti locations. FREE, donations welcome. Registration required. For more information visit thisbreath.com.

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Buddhism

Miracle of Mindfulness with Suzanne Xuereb & Georgia Greene • Ongoing Sundays • 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. • The Huron River Mindfulness Community is a safe and inclusive meeting place for anyone to practice mindfulness in the tradition of Plum Village, established by Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh. This is a peer led group and there are four to five members that facilitate depending on the group. FREE, donations to Zen Temple of Ann Arbor accepted. For more information contact the HRMC at (734) 273-9991, email huronrivermc@gmail.com, or visit huronrivermc.com.

Practical Buddhism with Gelek Rimpoche • Wednesday, December 3, 10, & 17 • 7 to 8:30 p.m. • "Practical Buddhism" offers video recordings of earlier teachings by Gelek Rimpoche as an opportunity for some to revisit and as an introduction for others. A panel discussion with Jewel Heart Instructors follows each session. Discussions are not recorded. Sessions will review Gelek Rimpoche's 2012 Sunday talks and into early 2013. FREE, donations welcome. For more information contact Jewel Heart at (734) 994-3387, email programs@jewelheart.org, or visit jewelheart.org.

Jewel Heart Sunday Talks: Ancient Wisdom, Modern Times with Demo Rinpoche • Sunday, December 7, 14, 21, & 28 • 11 a.m. to 1:15 p.m. • Join Demo Rinpoche for weekly Sunday morning public talks on a variety of topics that are suitable for newcomers and long-timers alike, followed by a facilitated group discussion based on the morning talk. FREE, donations welcome. For more information contact Jewel Heart at (734) 994-3387, email programs@jewelheart.org, or visit jewelheart.org.

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Year-End Candle-Lighting Service with Maum Gloria Cox • Wednesday, December 31 • 8 to 10:00 p.m. • This is an occasion to take stock of one's life and to greet the new year in contemplation and reflection. Everyone is welcome to come share this beautiful service with us. $20 donation. For more information contact Jewel Heart at (734) 994-3387, email programs@jewelheart.org, or visit jewelheart.org.

Ceremonies, Celebrations, and Rituals

Sunday Celebration with Interfaith Center for Spiritual Growth • Ongoing Sundays • 10:45 a.m. to Noon • We explore universal truths from all spiritual paths. Donations are gratefully received. For more information visit interfaithspirit.org.

Winter Solstice Ritual Celebration with Esther Kennedy • Sunday, December 21 • 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. • With joy and anticipation, we await the coming light, rising from within the darkness. Teilhard de Chardin states, "There is light and only light ahead of us." In song and dance we remember that "we are light for those we meet and for our world." FREE. For more information contact the Weber Center (517)-266-4000 or visit webercenter.org.

What's New in the Community

SPOTLIGHT!

By Lynda Gronlund

Brighton-based registered aromatherapist Gina DeMeyere incorporated her aromatherapy practice..

During the global pandemic she sought formal training and became a certified aromatherapist through the National Association of Holistic Aromatherapists. Continuing her training, she has also been certified in trauma aromatherapy and artisan incense crafting.

DeMeyere specializes in custom blended aromatherapy using several methods of choosing the right type and balance of oils and method of delivery for the individual. These include chemistry and research on each oil, the perfumery model of the different aromatics, energetics, and elements of basic Chinese medicine. She prefers to meet one on one with clients in the consultation office she has created in her home, allowing her to collaborate with each person, getting feedback as they "build the aromatic prescription" together. "We're so used to an allopathic medicine culture," she said, in which we "do what the doctor says." With her process, she explained, the client has a part in their own healing, creating buy-in and ownership, increasing adherence to the co-created plan of use. She can also tell right away by the client's facial expression when a particular oil is not right for them. She explained that people who have tried aromatherapy in the past and haven't been helped, "just haven't been getting the right oils. If something doesn't work, we re-blend. Bodies change, hormones and chemistry change, and we have to be able to adapt and move with that."

Once the right oil blends have been determined, DeMeyere can create the perfect product for clients to use, whether it's a roll-on, balm, lotion, spray, or even incense. It all depends on the client's preferences and what they will be most likely to use on a regular basis.

DeMeyere's clients are generally seeking help with chronic conditions that have been difficult to resolve. Perimenopausal and menopausal women, people with chronic pain, and parents whose children are experiencing learning and attention issues have all experienced relief from symptoms. She stated that she is "not a life coach," but that she does make lifestyle suggestions based on four pillars: diet, exercise, stress management, and sleep. "There is a place for aromatics in all of those pillars," she said.

She is particular about the oils and aromatics she uses in everything she makes, she explained. The chemical components of the oil are important, and backed with lots of research, she said, so she does not purchase from companies that do not provide information on exactly what is in the bottle and the processes used to distill them. Freshness is important too, she added.

She does have a small website shop with aromatherapy items that are helpful for most people, but her passion is in customizing blends for individuals. Recently, she began offering a "quick custom:" a client can choose from a variety of drop-down menus for her to create a blend. "It's a quick way to get custom aromatics in peoples' hands," she said. She said that she loves to engage people one-on-one and educate on the benefits of aromatics. She said that many people dismiss aromatherapy as "magic, or crazy," but "there's a lot of science behind it." And "nothing that God created is bad; he gave us these beautiful plants and medicines and there's nothing wrong with any of it."

Gina DeMeyere's website is gigisapothecarie.com. She can be reached by email through her website, or by phone at (810) 623-4389.

Resources for Conscious Living

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Essay and Photo by Katherine Munter

“One sees clearly only with the heart. Anything essential is invisible to the eyes.” -Antoine de Saint-Exupery, *The Little Prince*

As last year drew to a close, I received a letter from a friend. Rather than a resolution, she invited me to choose a word to embrace for the year ahead. This word would become a focal or grounding point. When confronted with a decision, I was encouraged to ask myself which path brings me closer toward the meaning of this word.

My friend told me to take my time, look up the history of the word, and search in the thesaurus to be sure the word encompasses exactly what I want to focus on. I hadn’t even finished her letter when a word burst into my mind: connection. I decided to sit with it and see if any other words emerged. No other words felt exactly right. My desire for connection was strong, and I decided to allow this word to guide me in the year ahead.

I didn’t realize when I chose to focus on connection how grateful I’d feel by the end of the year. Having a word inform my decisions was easy to commit to. It became a gentle reminder, a friend that nudged me in a direction when I needed a boost.

Connection is woven together over time, like an intricate tapestry of memories. Our stories become woven together with others, to the extent that it becomes hard to imagine our life without certain people in it. Sometimes years pass, yet when we reconnect, we can fall easily back into a rhythm, as though no time has passed. We can sit together and reminisce, looking at some of those little stitches of memory with cozy nostalgia.

We don’t go through life without losing some connections. Some broken threads we understand, and others become tender places where grief, loneliness, and regret can reside.

It feels magical and precious when you meet someone who you feel you’ve known forever. These kindred spirits seem to easily understand and relate to you without the need for explanation. They just sit down beside you at the loom, and before you realize it, you begin to weave your stories together.

New friendships can broaden your horizons and encourage you to take risks to pursue your goals. A new connection told me that her word for the year had been courage. I found myself instantly inspired by that word, and I started to consider its meaning.

Courage in English has come to mean having the mental resolve to persevere when confronted by a challenge, especially when it’s something you fear. The root “cor” comes from the Latin word for heart. The French word for heart, “coeur” stays closer to these Latin roots. The French word for courage is the same as English.

When French speakers want to show empathy and offer support to someone facing a challenge, they say “bon courage.” The direct translation would be good courage, but the phrase goes deeper than that. It’s about sending heartfelt inner strength and resilience. You’re sending someone strength from your heart to theirs so that they may get through the difficult path ahead.

This coming year, I’m inspired to face decisions heart first, not allowing fear to cloud my judgment or hold me back. I’ll ask my heart to guide me, and I’ll let courage move me forward.

I warmly invite you to choose a word that describes something you’d like to focus on or move toward in the coming year. How would you like to show up in the world, and what word could help you to move in that direction?

-Katherine Munter, clinical psychologist, art therapist, and founder of Creative Life Therapy, an Ann Arbor practice of art therapy and integrative wellbeing. Learn more at www.CreativeLifeTherapy.com.

The Crazy Wisdom Calendar

Channeling

Remembering Wholeness: Darshan with the Mother & Barbara Brodsky • Tuesday, December 14 • 2 to 5:00 p.m. • Darshan with The Mother offers loving guidance to support your journey. The Mother speaks both personally and collectively, addressing where we may feel stuck and helping release what no longer serves. With support from Aaron and Yeshua, she shares messages of wholeness, always holding each being in a container of deep, unconditional love and compassion. Suggested donation: single $10-30; all $40-$120. For more information contact the Deep Spring Center at (734) 477-5848, email om@deepspring.org, or visit deepspring.org.

Evenings with Aaron & Barbara Brodsky • Wednesday, December 10 • 7 to 9:00 p.m. • Evenings with Aaron meets monthly and is open to all. Since 1989, Aaron has offered insight on current world issues, guiding us to respond from loving awareness. He reminds us all experiences are teachers, encouraging dynamic compassion—living spiritually grounded lives. Some evenings include specific practices or guest teachings from Aaron's spirit friends, plus open discussion. Suggested donation: single $10-30; all $40-$120. For more information contact the Deep Spring Center at (734) 477-5848, email om@deepspring.org, or visit deepspring.org.

Death and Dying

Death Cafe with Rev. Annie Kopko • Tuesday, December 2 • 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. • A group-directed discussion of death, with no agenda, objectives, or themes. It is a discussion group rather than a grief-support or counseling session. FREE, but donations gratefully received. For more information visit interfaithspirit.org.

Ann Arbor Virtual Death Café with Rachel Briggs • Tuesday, October 4, December 6 • 11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. • Conversation on zoom about all things related to death and dying. Participants join in small and large group discussion with deep listening and sharing from the heart. No agenda, no presentation. For more info visit www.DeathCafe.com. Open to all adults. Please note: This is not a grief support group. For more information contact Merilynne at (734) 395-9660, email thedyingyear@gmail.com, visit thedyingyear.org or DeathCafe.com

Ann Arbor Death Cafe In-Person Meeting with Merilynne Rush • Saturday, December 20 • 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. • Conversation about all things related to death and dying. Small and large group discussion, deep listening, and sharing from the heart. No agenda, no presentation. Coffee, tea, and snacks available. Open to all adults. Accessible, confidential. Please note: This is not a grief support group. FREE. For more information contact Merilynne at (734) 395-9660, email thedyingyear@gmail.com, visit thedyingyear.org or DeathCafe.com.

Drumming

Drummunity Circles with Lori Fithian • Saturday, December 20 • 7 to 8:30 p.m. • Come join the Drummunity! All ages, all levels welcome. Drums and percussion instruments provided or bring your own. Rhythmic Fun for the whole --with a focus on community-building. Rhythm games, singing, dancing, and improvising will bring us together! A $5 donation for the center is most welcome. For more information contact Lori at (734) 426-7818, email lorifithian@mac.com, or visit interfaithspirit.org.

Energy and Healing

Healing through Connecting Constelallations™ Sacred Saturday Workshop with Michaelene Ruhl • Saturday, December 6 • 1 to 6:00 p.m. • Join us in a sacred, compassionate space to reconnect with yourself, ancestors, and others. Through family and systemic constellations, experience healing, insight, and peace—simply by being present. No judgment, just love. $185. For more information contact Michaelene at (248) 345-3557, email michaelene@constellationhealingarts.com, or visit constellationhealingarts.com.

Healing & Ascension Monthlies Series with Rev. Eve Wilson • Thursday, December 18 • 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. • Every four weeks for two hours Eve Wilson, Master Healer/World Healing & Ascension Worker guides and empowers 40+ people into the new world experience. Once there, we work to heal and ascend our human selves and the world we live in. We work by phone conference call, so each of us can be focused on our own work and not distracted by others. $300 Series; pay as you go or sliding scale options. For

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The Fae of Oakwood Park

By Peggy River Singer

For this article I'm using the term "fae" to refer to fairies, elves, gnomes, and other nonhuman mystical beings. Creator invited them to Earth billions of years ago to care for all living things, and they've been here ever since.

When I moved into this apartment on Ford Lake in Ypsilanti, Michigan, I was welcomed by an elegantly perfect goose turd formed from twisted and woven grasses which had been deposited on my front step. (I've always loved Canada Geese, so I recognized this natural weaving project as a housewarming gift.) Then I found a "daddy long-legs" spider on the wall behind my front door. I knew then that it had been a good decision to move to this place.

Once I was settled, I "announced" that my new home was open to all. Now that I live next to the Huron River, fae who travel this natural highway have a safe place to rest for the night. I've been told that a sort of "welcome sign" which is visible only to nonhumans is in front of my place.

POPULAR QUESTIONS PEOPLE ASK ME

How many fae folk are in your home at any given time?

I don't really know. Since they stay in non-physical energetic form, there's no practical limit to how many can be here at the same time.

Can you see all these beings?

No. I actually prefer *not* to see them because it would be extremely distracting.

How do you know the fae are there if you can't see them?

I can feel their presence. In times of severe weather, my home does feel more crowded; however, visitors are very considerate and careful to control their energies so I don't feel overwhelmed.

Do any "bad guys" like trolls ever try to come in?

Sometimes. My house rule is that any being who needs shelter is welcome as long as they're willing to behave themselves. Often, they go up in the attic or under the building. They are told that they will be evicted if they cause problems. So far that has happened only three times that I know of.

Who takes care of all these visitors?

There are greeters, organizers, ambassadors, translators, and other such folk to help take care of everyone's needs.

Do you feed all these beings every day?

No, but I do share things like fresh fruit, chocolate, popcorn, and my Saturday-night beer; and I put out a pretty little flowered bowl of fresh water in the evening. Some fae enjoy human food and drink—many do not; so, they must make their own arrangements, and they probably trade and barter with other visitors. No one goes hungry or thirsty.

How do I invite the fae into my own home?

I can pretty much guarantee that you already have fae housemates of some kind. You might simply say out loud that now you understand all this, and your unseen visitors are welcome. Freshley baked bread or chocolate chip cookies will always be appreciated!

So, what do I DO with my fae guests?

On Christmas Eve, I read *The Night Before Christmas* out loud to the fae children; I can feel them sitting on my arms and shoulders. On May 1 – a major fairy holiday – I read out loud from a short book of poems about fairies. On July 4, we all watch the fireworks on television. Warn them when you're about to start cleaning, or when company is coming. You might also get into building fairy houses and fairy doors, or planting fairy gardens. There are lots of possibilities!

Here's The Bottom Line: The unseen communities of the fae have always been our neighbors. You can enrich your life and help the Earth by providing shelter to these magical beings who care for all of Nature!

Peggy River Singer is an all-beings communicator, channeler, and Faery Ally. She dwells in a funky little apartment on the enchanted shores of Ford Lake in Ypsilanti, where she teaches fae folk how to use and share Reiki to help bring more joy and healing into the world. More of her articles are posted on angelsfairiesandlife.wordpress.com. To request a communication session, please call (734) 548-0194.

more information contact Eve at (734) 780-7635, email evew@spiritualhealers.com, or visit spiritualhealers.com.

Exercise and Fitness

Total Body Strength and Balance with Jackie Farah • Monday, December 1, 8, 15, 22, & 29 • 9 to 10:00 a.m. • Total Body Strength and Balance is a fusion class drawing on elements of strength and circuit training, cardio, core balance, Pilates, and barre. Instructors offer their classes a workout covering every major muscle group, moving from weightlifting and balance to abdominal and lower body work. $26 or Class Package available. For more information contact Imagine Fitness and Yoga at (734) 622-8119, email imagine@imaginefitnessandyoga.com, or visit imaginefitnessandyoga.com.

Fundamentals of Pilates and Stretching for Back Care with Sara Atwell • Monday, December 1, 8, 15, 22, & 29 • 9:30 to 10:30 a.m. • If you are new to Pilates this is your class. Pilates is a series of exercises designed to strengthen the core including back shoulders and hips. The exercises will be broken down to support new movers and those that want to review technique and Pilates principles. Focus will be on gradual strength, flexibility, and stability. $26 or Class Package available. For more information contact Imagine Fitness and Yoga at (734) 622-8119, email imagine@imaginefitnessandyoga.com, or visit imaginefitnessandyoga.com.

Cardio Plus with Jackie Farah • Monday, December 1, 8, 15, 22, & 29 • 10 to 11:00 a.m. • Cardio combined with total body strength training. This fun class will use different equipment to strengthen all muscle groups, improve balance, and keep your heart rate up. Emphasis is placed on proper form while safely increasing muscular strength, improving core stability, and cardiovascular fitness. All experience and fitness levels welcome. $26 or Class Package available. For more information contact Imagine Fitness and Yoga at (734) 622-8119, email imagine@imaginefitnessandyoga.com, or visit imaginefitnessandyoga.com.

Build and Tone Your Upper Body & Stability with Jackie Farah • Tuesday, December 2, 9, 16, 23, & 30 • 9 to 10:00 a.m. • Target all major muscles. We utilize a mix of free weights, resistance bands, med balls, stability balls and BOSU balls. It is suited for everyone to a beginner to a fitness fanatic. Resistance training does more than just make your muscles stronger—it can also boost your metabolism, improve your posture and mood, and much more. $26 or Class Package available. For more information contact Imagine Fitness and Yoga at (734) 622-8119, email imagine@imaginefitnessandyoga.com, or visit imaginefitnessandyoga.com.

Balance, Flexibility, & Core Strength with John Farah • Tuesday, December 2, 9, 16, 23, & 30 • 2 to 3:00 p.m. • A total body workout with a focus on strengthening the core and balance. You will improve overall balance, posture, muscle tone, and mobility as you learn to move the body to help avoid injury and strengthen your balance. $26 or Class Package available. For more information contact Imagine Fitness and Yoga at (734) 622-8119, email imagine@imaginefitnessandyoga.com, or visit imaginefitnessandyoga.com.

Cardio Plus with Lisa Camfield • Tuesday, December 2, 9, 16, 23, & 30 • 6 to 7:00 p.m. • Cardio combined with total body strength training. This fun class will use different equipment to strengthen all muscle groups, improve balance, and keep your heart rate up. Emphasis is placed on proper form while safely increasing muscular strength, improving core stability, and cardiovascular fitness. All experience and fitness levels welcome. $26 or Class Package available. For more information contact Imagine Fitness and Yoga at (734) 622-8119, email imagine@imaginefitnessandyoga.com, or visit imaginefitnessandyoga.com.

Balance, Flexibility, & Core Strength with John Farah • Wednesday, December 3, 10, 17, 24, & 31 • 9 to 10:00 a.m. • A total body workout with a focus on strengthening the core and balance. You will improve overall balance, posture, muscle tone and mobility as you learn to move the body to help avoid injury and strengthen your balance. $26 or Class Package available. For more information contact Imagine Fitness and Yoga at (734) 622-8119, email imagine@imaginefitnessandyoga.com, or visit imaginefitnessandyoga.com.

Cardio & Core Fusion with Jill Goldstein • Thursday, December 4 • 9 to 9:50 a.m. • Step into Cardio & Core Fusion, a dynamic fitness class that seamlessly blends low-impact cardio with strength training and mat exercises, designed for all levels of fitness. Whether you're just starting your fitness journey or are an experienced enthusiast, this class adapts to your pace and abilities. $26 or Class Package available. For more information contact Imagine Fitness and Yoga at (734) 622-8119, email imagine@imaginefitnessandyoga.com, or visit imaginefitnessandyoga.com.

Total Body Strength with Lisa Camfield • Thursday, December 4 • 6 to 7:00 p.m. • Increase your strength, improve your balance and stability, and have fun. This class uses different equipment to strengthen all muscle groups with an emphasis on core strength and stability. All experience and fitness levels welcome. $26 or Class Package available. For more information contact Imagine Fitness and Yoga at (734) 622-8119, email imagine@imaginefitnessandyoga.com, or visit imaginefitnessandyoga.com.

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From Our Archives

Winter Boredom Busters

By Christine MacIntyre

When the chill of winter sets in and the days grow shorter, it's easy for kids to feel stuck indoors with nothing to do. But winter doesn't have to be boring! From exploring local spots and discovering wildlife in its winter habitat to cozying up with a good book, trying out hands-on crafts, or creating a snowthemed masterpiece at home, there's plenty to keep young minds busy and curious all season long. All it takes is a little creativity to make this frosty time of year fly by.

Winter Wildlife

Winter may seem like a quiet time in nature, but it's one of the best seasons for spotting wildlife. With bare trees and snow-covered ground, catching glimpses of animals going about their winter routines is easy. Local nature reserves and parks are great places to go birding. Keep an eye out for tracks, too—following tracks can be an exciting way to see where animals have been. Whether you're watching squirrels busily gathering walnuts hidden in fall, or hearing the distant hoot of an owl, winter reveals a hidden world of wildlife just waiting to be discovered.

Of course, there are also many ways to explore winter wildlife without leaving the house. Kids can likely spot rabbits darting through the snow or deer foraging. Asking questions about what they observe opens a window to discuss animals and how they survive in the wintertime, what animals thrive in winter, and so much more. Add to the learning by getting creative and having the kids draw what they see!

Leslie Science and Nature Center

This fantastic winter destination for kids offers a unique chance to experience nature up close even when the temperature dips below freezing. Kids can explore snowy woods and look for winter wildlife while getting some exercise on the outdoor trails. The center's live animal enclosures in the Critter House feature native frogs, turtles, snakes, and more.

The center's live animal enclosures, featuring owls, hawks, and other raptors, give kids a rare opportunity to see these magnificent creatures up close. Plus, special winter programs and interactive exhibits make it a fun, hands-on learning experience that brings nature to life all year round.

Learn more through their website, discoverscienceandnature.org/leslie-center, or call (734) 997-1553. The Leslie Science and Nature Center is located at 1831 Traver Road in Ann Arbor.

Tiny Lions Cafe

Tiny Lions Cafe is the purr-fect winter getaway for kids who love cats. With activities like Yoga with Cats, Cats & Kids, and Teen Mewvie Nights, there's always something fun happening. Younger visitors can enjoy Tiny Tails Story Time or Coloring with Kitties while aspiring animal lovers can become Junior Volunteers. It's also an ideal spot for winter birthdays with a special party program. Kids can pet and play with the resident cats and, if the cats allow, even snuggle up for a cozy cuddle. The cafe offers a self-serve snack bar with hot chocolate, coffee, and light snacks, or families can bring food and enjoy a warm, relaxing time with their feline friends.

Learn more through their website, tinylions/org, or call them at (734) 661-3530. Tiny Lions Cafe is located at 5245 Jackson Road in Ann Arbor.

Dominos Farm Petting Farm

Dazzling Christmas decorations adorn the farm creating a magical setting for a festive winter day. As you stroll through the snowy wonderland, get up close with friendly animals, from llamas to goats and cows, all bundled up in their warm winter coats. Kids will learn farm and animal facts such as how animals stay warm and thrive in winter. The lively landscape provides perfect photo opportunities as well.

You can find more information and register for special events at their website, pettingfarm.com, or by calling (734) 998-0182. Domino Farm is located at 3001 Earhart Road in Ann Arbor.

Kensington Metropark Nature Center

Visit the Kensington Metropark Nature Center for an enchanting close-up experience with winter songbirds at the Chickadee Meet & Greet. Begin indoors to discover why these feathered friends are drawn to the center along with tips to attract them to your yard. Then, bundle up for a guided stroll along snowy paths where you can spot or photograph feathered friends. This easy-going adventure is perfect for young explorersNo experience is necessary, just dress warmly and bring a spirit of discovery! The nature center also offers exhibits and special programs throughout the year.

Learn more through their website, metroparks.com or call (810) 227-8917 for event dates and times. Kensington Metropark Nature Center is located at 4570 Huron River Parkway in Milford.

Arctic Art

Winter is the perfect time to channel creativity into artistic endeavors. The cold months offer inspiration whether it's the intricate designs of frost on a windowpane or the soft, muted colors of a snowy landscape. Kids can bring this wintry magic indoors by crafting snowflake mobiles, painting winter scenes, or building miniature snowmen out of clay. Local art studios often offer winter workshops where young artists can explore painting, pottery, or photography. For a cozy afternoon at home, DIY projects and crafts provide an opportunity to explore new hobbies. With endless ways to craft and create, winter becomes a season for artistic imagination to soar.

Scrap Creative Reuse Center

Scrap Creative Reuse Center offers a fun environment to get creative juices flowing through drop-in family crafting on Saturdays, workshops, and classes. The center inspires kids to reuse discarded materials creatively through educational programs and affordable materials. Winter day camps explore abstract art and activism through art, robots, pets, space, and more while reusing discarded objects and materials. Camps are a mixture of staff-led projects and free creation perfect for educating young artists while also nurturing creative expression.

View upcoming events and camps at annarbor.scrapcreativereuse.org or call (734) 800-4137. Scrap Creative Reuse Center is located at 4567 Washtenaw Avenue in Ann Arbor.

Ann Arbor Art Center

The Ann Arbor Art Center (A2AC) offers various art classes for all ages and skill levels. Whether you're interested in drawing, acrylic or oil painting, pottery, ceramics, jewelry, printmaking, textiles, or even digital art and graphic design, there's a class for everyone.

Shop manager Steph Mcdonald suggested families check out Family Fridays geared toward children aged five and up. “We also have a winter workshop where people can drop in and do projects as a family,” she said. Additionally, their winter break camp is geared toward children aged five to 12.

For a full schedule and camp registration, visit annarborartcenter.org or call (734) 994-8004. The Ann Arbor Art Center is located at 117 West Liberty Street in Ann Arbor.

Abrakadoodle

For a wide variety of art classes, camps, and events, Abrakadoodle is a fun option for kids of all ages. Projects prompt kids to engage in hands-on, active discovery through various materials such as paints, wire, clay, and more as they bring their ideas to life. No school mini day camps and specialty workshops are anoption for short-term fun, while art class series are stretched out over time so that kids work on step-by-step projects that build confidence through progression. From fun food art and collage making to famous faces drawing classes and mural art, kids will love spending the winter immersed in creative exploration.

Visit abrakadoodle.com/mi-wayne-county for more information, or call (734) 495-0900. The Abrakadoodle studio is located at 8016 Sheldon Center Road in Canton.

Whitepine Studios

Whitepine Studios is a well-liked art studio where kids can engage in several events perfect for beating winter boredom. Managing director Joanne Dence said they welcome children as young as three in their popular “Mommy and Me” workshops, held once a month on Wednesday mornings, and in their ceramic workshops offered monthly on Saturday mornings. They also host a monthly painting pARTy for kids ages five to 13, featuring a seasonal theme where kids can enjoy painting, socializing, and eating a complimentary treat. During the school year, kids can attend after-school classes that cover painting, drawing, sewing, ceramics, and mixed media with workshops designed especially for older children.

This winter, Dence said their Swiftie ornament workshop “will offer an exciting opportunity for intergenerational creativity.” The workshop is open to participants ages eight and older, including adults. Along with the special events offered throughout the year, Whitepine Studios is a great spot for birthdays welcoming kids ages four and up for fun and creativity. “Their commitment to tailoring each experience to the celebrant’s interest or party theme sets them apart,” according to Dence, as kids create one-of-a-kind projects that make each child feel special.

“We’re committed to inclusivity, providing creative opportunities for disabled kids to express themselves and enjoy art in a supportive environment,” said Dence. She reiterated the importance of every child having the chance to create and connect with others through art.

Visit whitepinestudios.org to find all their upcoming events or call (734) 3302079. Whitepine Studios is located at 105 West Michigan Avenue in Saline.

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The Crazy Wisdom Calendar

Exercise and Fitness continued...

Mat Pilates with Sarah Atfield • Friday, December 5, 12, 19, & 26 • 9 to 10:00 a.m. • Pilates involves a series of precise movements to strengthen your core muscles while making you more flexible. Pilates enhances posture, muscle tone, and joint mobility without high impact, flexibility, balance, coordination, concentration and is a great way to relieve stress. $26 or Class Package available. For more information contact Imagine Fitness and Yoga at (734) 622-8119, email imagine@imaginefitnessandyoga.com, or visit imaginefitnessandyoga.com.

Cycle and Strength with Jackie Farah • December 7, 14, 21, & 28 • 8:30 to 9:30 a.m.• Improve your cardiovascular fitness as you progress through a class challenging you with increased endurance and strength rides. Hop off the bike and get work on targeted muscle groups to tone and strengthen. For more information contact Imagine Fitness and Yoga at (734) 622-8119, email imagine@imaginefitnessandyoga.com, or visit imaginefitnessandyoga.com.

Festivals and Fairs

Enlightened Soul Holistic Psychic Fair with Enlightened Soul Center & Shop • Ongoing 1st and 3rd Saturdays • Noon to 6:00 p.m. • Join us for a fun-filled day at the Enlightened Soul Center! We have a selection of readers and healers for your enjoyment, along with visiting vendors for shopping! A great way to explore lots of readings and healings at one time, under one roof. Energy healers, shopping, snacks, and parking. $5. For more information visit enlightenedsoulcenter.com.

Michigan Psychic Fair • Sunday, December 7, 14 • Noon to 6:00 p.m. • Experience readings from gifted psychics and healers, and shop spiritual vendors who bring their unique talents and offerings to each psychic fair. From insightful readings to transformative healing sessions, they're here to guide and support you. Each weekend is a different location. Visit mipsychicfair.com for dates, towns, and full details.

Film

Free Film & Discussion with Jewel Heart instructors • Friday, December 12 • 7 to 9:15 p.m. •

- December 12—*Resurrection*, 2016. The story of a woman who survives the car accident that kills her husband. Discovering that she has the power to heal other people, she becomes an unwitting celebrity, the hope of those in desperate need of healing, and a lightning rod for religious beliefs and skeptics.

FREE, donations welcome. Concessions available. For more information contact Jewel Heart at (734) 994-3387, email programs@jewelheart.org, or visit jewelheart.org.

Food and Nutrition

Nutritionars(TM) & info-nars on Need-to-Know 21st Century Bioscience Key to Wellness Fall Seminar Series • Held Online and at To-Be-determined Venues • Typically 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. • Learn about the role pomegranate ingestion could have in mitigating Alzheimer's disease; about the science underpinning the purported benefits in the body obtained from ingesting certain foods/herbs/spices (cloves, cucumbers, cinnamon, etc.) $12 ea for groups of 3. $28 minimum for a solo session. For more information including current Nutritionar offerings please email ChE4theEarth@gmail.com.

Healing

Kidulting Makeover with Debra Metler • Saturdays, November 1, 8, 15, & 22, December 6 & 13 • 11:00 a.m. to Noon • Are you feeling old and cranky? Have you lost your youthful energy? You might need a Kidulting Makeover on Zoom. Feel young at any age! Have a lot of fun! Experience better health, less stress, and increased creativity. Bring your friends. Minimum of 3 required. $20/person. For more information contact Debra at (248) 819-2131, email debmetler@gmail.com, or visit guffaw.square.site.

Herbal Medicine

Class Visits to Herbal Medicine Class with Mary Light • Ongoing Saturdays • Times TBD • Mary has always welcomed prospective students to meet and see our studio, and ask any questions, receive literature, and apply. FREE. For more information contact Mary at (734) 769-7794.

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Resources for Conscious Living

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Ann Arbor, MI 48105
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Winter's

By Jeanne Mackey

Putting a positive spin on winter in Michigan is a bit of a hard sell. Our winters can be bleak, what with the gray skies and long nights. And I've got the audacity to suggest that you greet winter by slowing down and engaging in solitary reflection—at what is arguably the busiest time of the year. What was I thinking? Well, it's all about choice and attention. The choice to shift our attention in the midst of frenetic activity could bring magical moments of connection to winter's essence.

In the natural world, life moves in cycles. There are cycles of seasons, of a day, a relationship, a life. There are times when energy is on the rise, and times when it is falling. As you have undoubtedly noticed, we are experiencing descent! The earth's energy is moving downward and inward. Darkness falls by dinnertime. Not much is growing. The trees have dropped their leaves. If we didn't know better, we would think they are dying. And our bodies respond with fear at some cellular level. Despite our civilized surroundings, we retain the primal knowledge that we could die out there in the cold.

But the trees are not dying. They are shedding what they no longer need and pulling vital energy down into their trunks and roots. Life is held internally and underground. Plants rest in winter, gathering potency so they can burst forth when the time is right. The cold and dark allow them to gather power for an energetic start in spring.

In the five elements system of traditional Chinese medicine, winter is a time of deep listening—to ourselves, to Spirit, to silence. Winter is a great time to allow ourselves to dream without committing to action—to simply take pleasure in visions of what might be. It is a time of inquiry and uncertainty, which may evoke doubts and hard questions: "Am I living the life I want to live? Or am I playing to the crowd, trying to look good?" Hopefully we can learn, as Rainer Maria Rilke wrote in his "Letters to A Young Poet", to "be patient toward all that is unsolved in your heart and try to love the questions themselves..."

It is easier to see the essence of things in this season. The trees are no longer shielded by their leaves, so we can see their fundamental structure. It may be a time when we can see our own true nature more clearly. That feels true to me on a personal level. Now in the winter of my life, I find opportunities to live more

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authentically. The lessons are not always gentle ones, but they offer greater freedom.

So how does all this honoring of the season fit with modern culture? Truth be told, it doesn't! The period between Thanksgiving and New Years' is notoriously overscheduled, between socializing, shopping, family, and work. We expect ourselves to go full tilt, 24-7-365. And yet nature reminds us of ebb and flow. What is full will one day be empty. Each of us must face times of darkness and not-knowing.

Approaching winter in a more balanced, harmonious way could start with a shift in attention—even for just a moment. Pause to appreciate the silhouette of bare trees against the setting sun, or the honk of wild geese overhead. Stay warm. Spend time in silence. Take a walk that's more about experience than exercise. Watch an entire sunset or sunrise. Sit in nature and watch wildlife. Take a long, soaking bath. Watch and listen to water. Look at the stars. Sleep when you are tired. No matter where we come from, it is likely that our ancestors gathered around a fire and told stories. We can draw on their wisdom, even if the fire is a flickering candle. There's a reason that so many religious traditions in this season celebrate images of light in the midst of darkness.

As we descend into the sacred dark, I wish you strong dreams and deep peace. May each of us find times of solitude, rest, and contemplation. May we discover ways to explore the fertile darkness and make friends with silence, knowing that a good winter means a strong spring. Imagine how much force it takes for a seed to break out of its casing and push through the soil to reach the sun. If we truly allow ourselves to restore and replenish ourselves in winter, we will have the strength to burst forth in the spring with restored energy, clear vision, and a sense of purpose. So may it be!

Resources for Conscious Living

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thisbreath.com
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Ann Arbor & Ypsilanti, Michigan

Root Medicine and Winter Tonics

By Anna Fernandez

The life force in a biannual or perennial plant is evident in the greenness of its leaves and the vibrancy of its flower. As it begins to die back in the fall, that life force is not lost; it is transferred into the root, which embraces it and keeps it safe until the next growing season.

Thinking of it this way, when using roots as medicines, one can see why the best time to harvest such a treasure is in the late fall or early spring — when the life force is still strongest in the root.

Winter is an important time to take certain root medicines because of the nature of our winter lifestyles; eating heavier foods and spending less time outdoors results in less digestive vitality and lack of activity, which can make us vulnerable to illness. Certain roots can be taken daily over time to restore and tone the organs and systems, bringing about overall health and well-being and potentially preventing imbalance and disease. Herbs taken in this way are called tonics. Other roots are taken for a short duration in response to acute symptoms.

Many local Michigan plants have roots that are considered tonics. Some are abundant, well known, and considered to be like a food. Others are more medicinal and often harder to find. Southeast Michigan boasts an array of both.

Dandelion root is an easy-to-find tonic herb known for its nutritive value. It is gentle yet effective for improving liver, gallbladder, and overall digestive function, and it may also help normalize blood sugar levels. This underutilized plant may play a key role in preventative medicine.

Burdock root is rich in minerals and can be eaten in stir-fries and is great in soups. Burdock is used as a tonic to support the liver and aid in digestion. It helps to restore normal function by improving metabolism and aiding in the elimination of waste products. This root also stimulates circulation in the skin and is frequently used for skin conditions, especially ones of the dry and scaly variety that often present during the winter months.

The root of the Astragalus plant is used as an immune tonic to strengthen the overall immune system, build resistance, and prevent common infections. Mild in flavor, it is a great addition to hearty winter soups.

Adaptogens are a group of herbs considered to be the ultimate tonics. Many of the most highly revered adaptogens are roots. These herbs increase overall health and vitality by modulating the body's response to stressors via the endocrine system, which in turn boosts immune and nervous system function. Some adaptogen roots include Ginseng, Ashwagandha, Eleuthero, and Licorice.

Echinacea root, although not considered a tonic, is widely used as an immune boosting herb taken over a short duration in frequent doses at the first sign of a sniffle. It boosts white blood cell count and encourages the body to do the housecleaning necessary to stay healthy.

These roots can be harvested and made into winter medicines, including teas, tinctures syrups, capsules, and so on. Alternatively, you can find them in many forms at your local herbalist or health food store.

These roots are a small representation of herbs available for maintaining wellness. It makes sense that the deep, earthy energy of roots would play a role in helping us stay healthy in the long, dark, and cold winter months.

Anna Fernandez is an herbalist and the owner of Mother Bloom Botanicals. She lives outside of Chelsea on a small farm with her husband and two children. Learn more online at motherbloom.com.

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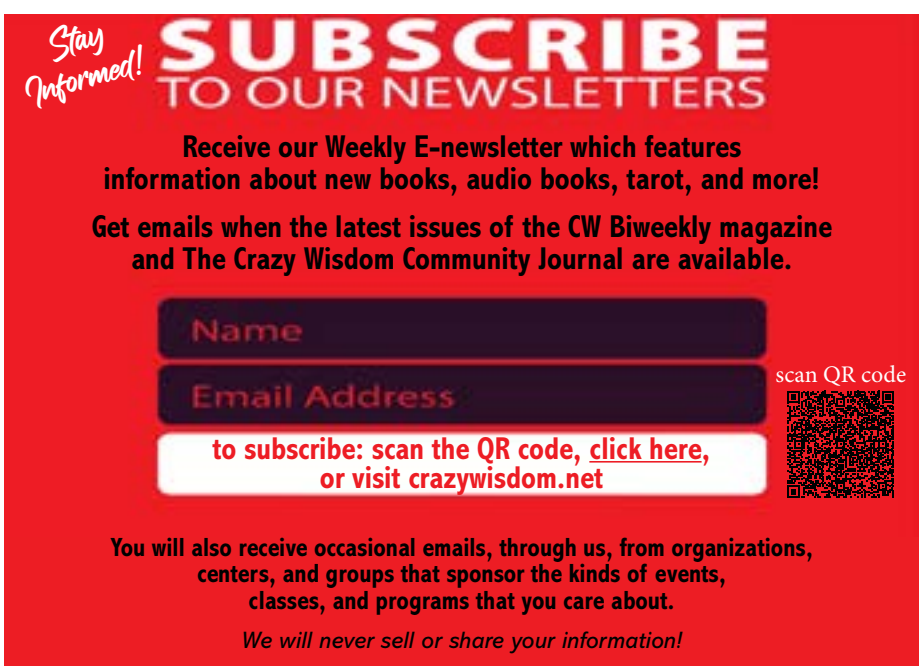
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Missed the calendar deadline for the fall issue of The Crazy Wisdom Community Journal? You can still submit to The CW Monthly calendar and have your event posted to our online calendar. Learn more here:

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The Crazy Wisdom Calendar

Herbal Medicine continued...

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Herbal Medicine Class Meet and Greet with Mary Light • Saturday, November 15 • 9:30 a.m. • Each date is a different topic, held the 3rd Saturday of the month, no background necessary. Holistic bodywork, Hydrotherapy, nervous system balancing. These are great previews to our year-long certification series. Full day of natural medicine classes for $150; ½ hour of FREE observation. For more information contact Mary at (734) 769-7794.

Herbal Medicine Certification Enrollment with Mary Light • Saturday, November 15, & December 6 • 11 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. • These are times to visit, register, enroll, meet Mary and students, and prepare yourself to participate in the Medicinal Herbalist Certification Program which begins January

Intuitive and Psychic Development

Psychic Psychology Women's Group Meditation: Teleconference with John Friedlander & Gloria Hemsher • Tuesday, December 2 • 7 to 8:00 p.m. • For women only; meditations concentrating on women's issues relative to biological energies and the aura. $10. For more information contact Violeta at 734-476-1513 or visit psychicpsychology.org.

Focused Mind Meditation: Teleconference with John Friedlander • Sunday, December 7 • 9 a.m. to Noon • Development of sustained focused meditation makes it easy to develop a whole new magnitude of psychic skill and healing, as well as a new level mental clarity and spiritual openness. $15. For more information contact Violeta at 734-476-1513 or visit psychicpsychology.org.

Meditation

Weekly Silent Meditation Practice with Celeste Zygmont • Ongoing Sundays from 11:00a.m. to Noon AND/OR Ongoing Tuesdays from 9 to 9:30 a.m. • This offering is open to all with a willingness to observe the self, kindly and rest in pure awareness. We begin with brief chanting, followed by silent Vipassana meditation. After the bell rings, you may leave or stay to share or ask questions. This is not a class or guided meditation—simply shared practice. Donation based. For more information contact the Deep Spring Center at (734) 477-5848, email om@deepspring.org, or visit deepspring.org.

A Day of Mindfulness Meditation with Esther Kennedy • Saturday, December 6 • 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. • Join our mindfulness community as we deepen our understanding of and commitment to daily meditation practice. Reflecting upon our relationships with honesty and courage, we amplify our capacity to be love within family, neighborhood, city, and world. $35.00 (Lunch included). For more information contact the Weber Center at (517)-266-4000 or visit webercenter.org.

Meditation on Serenity & Compassion with Khenpo Tshering Chophel • Saturday, December 6, 13, 20, & 27 • 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. Meditation on compassion starts with serenity then opens our hearts to genuine caring for all beings. Recognizing that everyone shares the wish to be happy and free from suffering, we practice broadening our focus beyond our own wellbeing. Ongoing; participants can attend whenever they wish; no prior meditation experience necessary. FREE, donations accepted. For more information contact Lama Nancy at (734) 649-2127, email lamanancy@karunabuddhistcenter.org, or visit karunabuddhistcenter.org.

White Tara Guided Healing Meditation with Jewel Heart Instructors • Sunday, December 7, 14, 21, & 28 • 9:30 to 10:35 a.m. • Tara is the mother goddess of Tibetan Buddhism, known for her quick and compassionate activity. White Tara is particularly associated with healing and long life. These guided meditations use visualization techniques to overcome physical, mental, and emotional suffering. FREE, donations welcome. For more information contact Jewel Heart at (734) 994-3387, email programs@jewelheart.org, or visit jewelheart.org.

Healing and Compassion Meditations with Hartmut Sagolla • Monday, December 1, 8, 15, & 22 • Noon to 1:00 p.m. • Hartmut Sagolla leads a 30 to40 minute guided meditation on a Buddhist theme followed by discussion. Meditations are centered around healing oneself and others and developing compassion. They include concentrated meditation, visualization, and contemplative meditations. FREE. For more information contact Jewel Heart at (734) 994-3387, email programs@jewelheart.org, or visit jewelheart.org.

Meditation with Jadal Tulku Lobsang Sherap • Tuesday, December 2, 9, 16, 23, & 30 • 6 to 6:45 p.m. • Join Jadal Tulku's weekly meditation sessions focused on becoming more aware of your thoughts, feelings, and sensations, opening the door to understanding the nature of your mind and how it influences your experiences. A wonderful opportunity to learn and practice concentrated and analytical meditations in a group setting. FREE, donations welcome. For more information contact Jewel Heart at (734) 994-3387, email programs@jewelheart.org, or visit jewelheart.org.

Never-Ending Lamp of Liberation: A Lam Rim Master Class with Demo Rinpoche • Tuesday, December 2, 9, 16, 23, & 30 • 7 to 8:30 p.m. • In Tibetan, Lam Rim means the Stages of the Path and concisely presents the Tibetan Buddhist path in logical steps that can be learned by the practitioner. With Rinpoche's special guidance, the Lam Rim can help us develop a stable mind committed to enlightenment. No charge for Jewel Heart members / $100 for non-members who are registering for the first time. Give what you can; no one is turned away. For more information contact Jewel Heart at (734) 994-3387, email programs@jewelheart.org, or visit jewelheart.org.

Overnight Beginner's Zen Retreat with Ordained Meditation Teachers • Friday, December 5 & 6 • 7:00 pm to Noon • Held in the Temple's meditation hall, the course includes simple stretching exercises, work with the breath, meditation postures, concentration, and mindfulness practice. In addition to meditation instruction, the workshop includes overnight accommodation and a vegetarian breakfast. Cost is $160/$120 unwaged. For more information contact the Zen Buddhist Temple at (734) 761-6520 or email annarborzentemple@gmail.com.

Free Focus Café: Embodied Coworking on Zoom with Debra Hopper • Thursdays, December 4, 11, & 18 • 10 to 11:00 a.m. • Join us for an hour of calm, focused productivity. Begin by naming your intention, settle in with a short embodiment practice, then work quietly in good company. Wrap up with light accountability. Ideal for remote workers, students, creatives, and anyone who benefits from structure, support, and showing up. FREE. For more information contact Debra at (734) 355-6656, email hello@debrahopperonline.com, or visit debrahopperonline.com.

Music, Sound, and Voice

Folk Song Jam Along with Lori Fithian & Jean Chorazyczewski • Wednesday, December 3 • 6 to 7:30 p.m. • Join us for a different type of sing along—we'llproject lyrics and chords on a screen so you can sing and play along! All singers and players (especially beginners) welcome—Guitar, Ukulele, etc. We sing a little bit of everything—songs by folks! Come Join us! FREE. For more information contact Lori at (734) 426-7818, email folksongjamalong@gmail.com, or visit facebook.com/folksongjamalong.

Singing for Comfort with Layla Ananda • Thursday, December 11 • 7 to 8:15 p.m. • We sing short, easy-to learn, comforting songs, many of which come from the Threshold Choir repertoire. You can sing along, lead a song for our friendly, welcoming group (usually a dozen people), or simply listen. FREE, donations accepted. For more information visit interfaithspirit.org or mattwatroba.net.

Cafe 704 with Interfaith Center for Spiritual Growth • Friday, December 13 • 7 to 9:00 p.m. • Live music in a smoke- and alcohol-free venue, in person or livestream on Zoom. Schedule as follows: PATH (Sep. 13), Paul Vornhagen & Aron Kaufman (Oct. 11), Emily & Sam Slomovits featuring music of Joni Mitchell (Nov. 8), Marlena Studer and Steve Ragsdale (Dec. 13). For more information visit interfaithspirit.org.

Peace

Peace Generator with Craig Harvey • Friday, December 19 • 7 to 9:00 p.m. • Join our silent circle, in person and on Zoom, as we meditate on or pray for healing, miracles, and peace within ourselves and across the globe. FREE, donations gratefully received. For more information contact Craig at peacegenerator2001@gmail.com

Personal Growth

The Circle of Embodied Men with Dan DeSena • Wednesday, December 3 & 17 • 8 to 10:00 p.m. • Step into a space designed to help you connect with your body, explore healthy masculinity, and build meaningful relationships. This is more than a men's circle—it's a journey of growth and purpose. $30/session. For more information contact Dan at (734) 368-7819 or email desenadan@gmail.com.

Reiki

Restorative Yoga & Reiki-Lithotherapy Workshop with Andrea Astley Dinsdale of Crysterra Wellness • Friday, December 12 • 7 to 8:30 p.m. • Enjoy this gentle, calming yoga practice paired with the healing benefits of Reiki-Lithotherapy. This deeply nurturing and informative workshop teaches stress/anxiety reduction with appropriate crystals placed on the body as well as a mini-Reiki/Lithotherapy session from the instructor. Suitable for all fitness and experience levels. $30/$35. For more information visit crysterrawellness.com.

Retreats

Advent Retreat with Carol Ann Gross • Sunday, November 30 through Thursday, December 4 • Listening to the ccripture, reflection on its meaning, meditation, and quiet contemplation of the word will provide the context for a retreat which prepares us all for living fully the liturgical call to recognize and accept this new experience of God which begins with Jesus the Christ. Cost: Commuter: $125; Double: $225; Single: $325. For more information contact the Weber Center at (517)-266-4000 or visit webercenter.org

Shamansim

Journey Circle with Judy Liu Ramsey • Thursday, December 4 & 18 • 7 to 8:30 p.m. • Twice monthly shamanic journeying for personal inner work on themes designed to help you through transitions and new cycles of your life. Pre-requisite: knowing how to journey. For more information contact Judy at info@JudyRamsey.net or visit JudyRamsey.net.

Spiritual Development

Sufi Gathering with Imam Kamau Ayubbi • Ongoing Tuesdays • 7 to 8:00 p.m. • An evening of discussion and Sufi chanting on Zoom. A donation of $5-$10 is suggested. For more information visit interfaithspirit.org.

That Which is Already Awake is the Path: Awakening to the Joy and Unconditional Love Within with Barbara Brodsky, Aaron, & John Orr • Tuesday, December 2 & 16 • 6:45 to 9:00 p.m. • Each class blends meditation instruction with shared exploration. Sessions include a talk from Aaron, time for questions, and related practice. Together, we remember what is already awake within us and the practices that support resting in presence. How do we meet life's challenges with clarity, compassion, and deep, grounded participation in a changing world? For more information contact the Deep Spring Center at (734) 477-5848, email om@deepspring.org, or visit deepspring.org.

Sustainable Living Skills

Two-Hour Learning Tour at Strawbale Studio with Deanne Bednar • Sunday, December 14 • 10:00 a.m. • Tour the enchanting Strawbale Studio, Hobbit Sauna and more.. Ask Questions, see Rocket Stoves, Earth Oven, Thatched & Living Roofs, and mushroom logs! Also learn about the Winternship scheduled for Jan. 5 through Feb. 5, 2026 & Natural Building Weekend Workshops. Learn moreat http://strawbalestudio.org.

Earth Sculpting & Dream Catcher hands-on Workshop with Deanne Bednar • Sunday, December 14 • 1 to 5:00 p.m. • Enjoy Crafting at Strawbale Studio using local earth (clay-sand subsoil to create sculptures! You can embed nature materials or other objects! AND ....make a Dream Catcher or two! Fun, Relaxing. Learn moreat http://strawbalestudio.org.

Tai Chi, Martial Arts, and Self Defense

Beginner Tai Chi with Master Wasentha Young • Ongoing Mondays from 10 to 11:15 a.m. AND/OR Thursdays from 6 to 7:15 p.m. • Tai Chi, often characterized as a moving mindful meditation, is a series of postures linked together in a continuous flow. It integrates the mind and body, promotes relaxation, as well increases balance and concentration. You can attend both sessions at no extra cost! $225; semester begins September 8. For more information contact the Peaceful Dragon School at (734) 741-0695, email info@peacefuldragonschool.com, or visit peacefuldragonschool.com.

Chen Tai Chi Chuan with Joe Walters • Ongoing Tuesdays AND/OR Thursdays from 5 to 6:00 p.m. AND/OR Saturdays from 9:30 to 10:30 a.m. • Unique movement art emphasizing inner stillness and relaxation developed through disciplined whole-body integration and refined awareness. Instruction in stance training, coiling exercises, and Chen forms. FREE. For more information contact Joe at nnarbortaichi@gmail.com or visit annarbortaichi.com.

Continuing Tai Chi with Carmo Ribiero • Monday, December 1, 8, 15, 22, & 29 • 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. • Go beyond the basic principles of Beginners Tai Chi. The movements of Tai Chi are performed in a slow, relaxed fashion and provide numerous mental, physical, and spiritual benefits. Tai Chi has proven to reduce stress, improve balance, focus, memory, and concentration and increase

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By Lisa V. Gotte

Hygge, pronounced “hoo-gah,” is a Danish word that can most readily be described as a sort of coziness, although it’s more than that. It also comes from the word hugga, which is related to the word hug and means to comfort and console. So, it’s little surprise that it’s what keeps the Danes the happiest people on the planet even though they endure frigid winters with little daylight. Sunrise in a Copenhagen winter can be as late as 9:00 am while sunset can arrive not long after by 3:30 p.m. The average temperature in January is 32°F, hovering right around freezing for months. All that adds up to some long, dark, and cold days. Most Michiganders can relate to this kind of winter climate, but just because it’s cold and dark outside doesn’t mean you can’t enjoy yourself. Take a page from the Scandinavians and invite the warmth and conviviality of hygge into your home and life.

Create Your Own Coziness Indoors

Candles, nubby socks, a warm fireplace, sparkly lights, foamy lattes, and hot chocolate with friends and family, these are the things that hygge is made of. This comforting and relaxed way of life can be created in any home in any country with just a few items that most of us already have.

What you may need:

Candles and Fairy or Christmas Lights
Fuzzy Blankets and Warm Socks
Sturdy Mugs and Cups for Hot Drinks
Good Books and a Comfortable Spot in Which to Read Them

Light

Long, dark, and dreary days can be brightened with the right lighting. Strings of sparkly lights on mantles or over doorways don’t have to be put away right after Christmas. Leave them up to brighten some of the coldest months of the year. Low watt, warm white bulbs in lamps can also add a cozy and subdued atmosphere. Candles, of course, add their warm flicker.

Friends

The word conviviality is often included in any description of hygge. It’s most certainly possible to enjoy the warmth of hygge alone with some nubby socks and a cup of hot cocoa but friends make it even better. Sharing good food and conversation in a relaxed atmosphere is a perfect expression of hygge.

Scandinavians, in general, have a standard of living which allows most citizens a level of prosperity and the leisure time to enjoy it. While hygge can come across as bourgeois it’s not as consumer driven as it can appear to be on the surface. Generous doses of both gratitude and moderation are vital to the spirit of real hygge. It’s not about buying a dozen candles or having mountains of warm socks you may never wear. It’s enjoying a few well-made things that are mindfully enjoyed, provide genuine comfort, and may last for years.

The Swedish word, lagom, describes a sense of equality and moderation and is an important part of hygge. Lagom is sharing with those around you and getting along. This quality of lagom, which is sometimes criticized as being too bland and not making waves, can also help people get along and keep tensions and conflicts at bay.

Things to do:

Visit Restaurants and Coffee Shops with Friends
Arrange Group Hikes and Outdoor Activities
Find Local Places that have Game Nights

Get Outside

Hygge doesn’t only happen inside. Getting outside for hikes, ice skating, and skiing are also part of the philosophy of hygge. Star gazing on crisp and clear evenings is also a great way to get outside. Outdoor activities tend to promote a healthy body and happy mindset and any weather can be enjoyed when wearing suitable clothing. The contrast when coming in from the cold to a warm and inviting meal with friends can make each extreme even more enjoyable. It’s not just the warmth and comfort that is hygge, but the juxtaposition between that and the harsh and dreary climate.

You’ll need:

Warm Clothes for the Outdoors
Boots, Scarves, and Gloves
A Place to Walk, Hike, Ski, or Star Gaze

When you come in from that winter hike, take off your hats and gloves and settle in to make a batch of hot cocoa to share with companions.
A Recipe for Easy Hot Cocoa for Three

This recipe takes only minutes to make and is as easy as purchased hot cocoa mix. It’s creamy, chocolatey, and delicious. Just whisk together all the ingredients in a heavy bottomed pan and heat to just below boiling. The cocoa powder will mix in easily as the milk heats up. Once heated through, stir well, share with a couple of friends, and enjoy!

3 cups plant-based milk (almond, soy, cashew, or rice)
1/3 cup cocoa powder
1/3 cup brown sugar (or white)
1 tablespoon vanilla
Pinch of salt
Optional small sprinkle of cayenne pepper
Did you know? Hot chocolate and hot cocoa are not the same? Hot chocolate is made with melted chocolate thinned with milk. Hot cocoa is made with cocoa powder and other flavorings added in.

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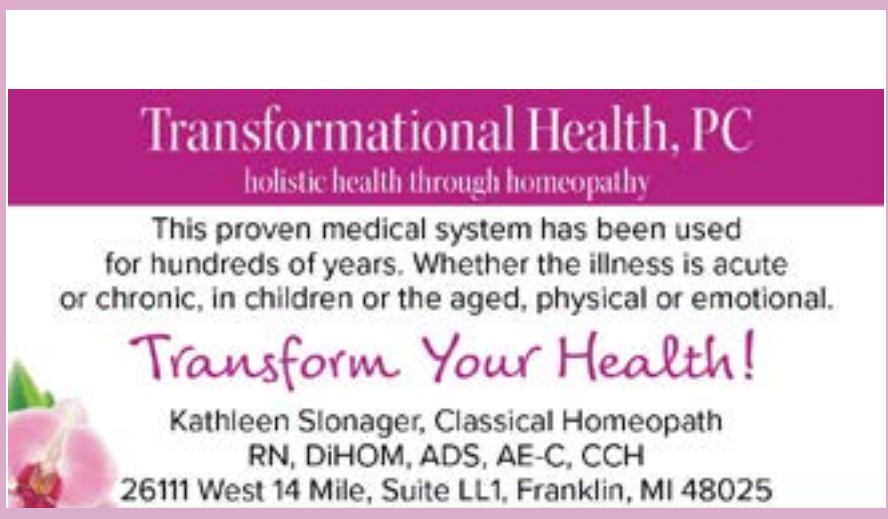
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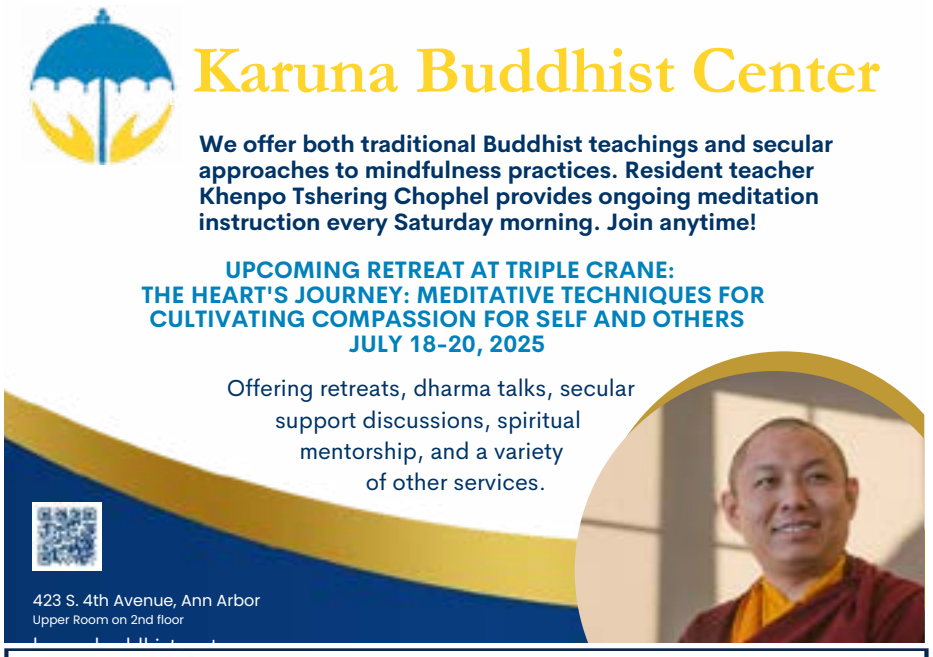
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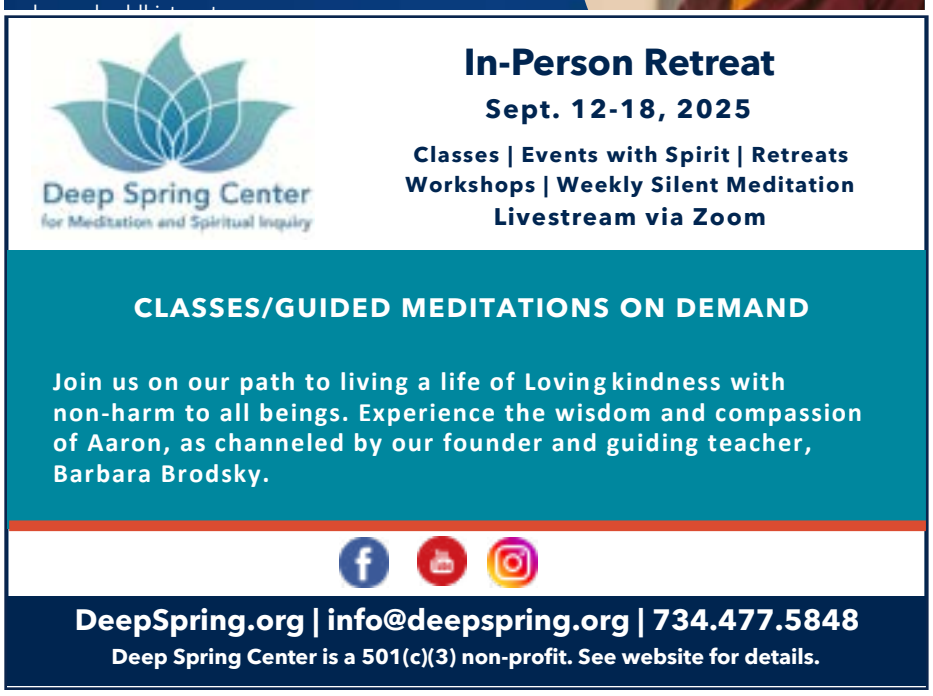
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Beginner Tai Chi with Carmo Ribiero • Wednesday, December 3, 10, 17, 24, & 31 • 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. • Whether you are completely new to Tai Chi or need to practice the fundamentals, learn about this "moving meditation" to help activate and stretch your muscles in a slow, gentle manner. No special clothing or equipment are required. Tai Chi helps to improve mental and physical wellness. $26 or Class Package available. For more information contact Imagine Fitness and Yoga at (734) 622-8119, email imagine@imaginefitnessandyoga.com, or visit imaginefitnessandyoga.com.

Advanced Tai Chi with Stuart Eddy • Friday, December 5, 12, 19, & 26 • Noon to 1:00 p.m. • Go beyond the basic principles of Beginners Tai Chi with movements performed in a slow, relaxed fashion and provide numerous mental, physical and spiritual benefits. Tai Chi has proven to reduce stress, improve balance, flexibility, focus, memory and concentration and increase strength, flexibility and overall well-being. $26 or Class Package available. For more information contact Imagine Fitness and Yoga at (734) 622-8119, email imagine@imaginefitnessandyoga.com, or visit imaginefitnessandyoga.com.

Wu Style Tai Chi Chaun with Marilyn Feingold • Sunday, December 7, 14, 21, & 28 • 4 to 5:00 p.m. • Learn the ancient art of meditation in motion with this "soft style" martial art emphasizing relaxation and balance. Drop-in - $5 per session collected at the door. For more information contact Jewel Heart at (734) 994-3387, email programs@jewelheart.org, or visit jewelheart.org.

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Tarot & Oracle Readings at Crazy Wisdom with Nina McDermott • Ongoing Fridays from 2 to 7:00 p.m. AND/OR Ongoing Saturdays from 3 to 7:00 p.m. • Intuitive Tarot & Oracle Readings with Nina provide clarity, guidance, and deep understanding. Ask a question or see what the cards have to tell you about what's going on in relationships, your spiritual path, or life challenges. Three card—$20, five card—$45, nine card— $65. For more information contact Nina McDermott (323) 363-4807, email nina@seeseehealing.com, or visit seeseehealing.com.

Intuitive Guide & Oracle Card Reader with Deborah Cherrin • Ongoing Saturdays from Noon to 5:00 p.m. & Sundays from Noon to 3:00 p.m. • Through her heartfelt approach and psychic awareness, Deborah uses tarot and oracle cards to help clients find comfort, clarity, and healing in all aspects of their lives. Deborah empowers others to trust their intuition and tap into their inner strength, fostering personal growth and transformation. $2 per minute. No services offered the final weekends of each month. For more information contact Deborah at debcherrin@gmail.com or visit wiseowlartandspirit.com.

Dance & Divination with Mylita Benjamin • Friday, December 19 • 7:30 to 9:00 p.m. • Using guided movement meditation, journaling, and ritual to explore the art of divination. there will be time for sharing in community, as well as additional support from our guide, Mylita. This is an LGBTQ+ and BIPOC safe space! Bring a Yoga mat, eye cover, journal, and water bottle. No dance or divination experience necessary, all levels welcome! $140. For more information contact Mylita at mylitabenjamin@gmail.com.

Theater

DJ Whittington's Kool Kat: A Hip-Hop Panto by Carla Milarch & R. MacKenzie Lewis • Friday, December 5 through Sunday, January 4 • Fridays at 7:30 p.m., Saturdays at 3:00 p.m. AND 7:30 p.m., Sundays at 2:00 p.m. • The holiday hilarity of our annual Panto returns. Bring the whole family to this rollicking all-ages entertainment with a hip-hop twist. Cheer the hero, boo the villain, and enjoy original tunes and kid-friendly parodies of popular hip-hop song—set to The Kool Kat's sick beats. Directed by Mike Sandusky. Single tickets: $32 for adults, $12 for kids 16 years and under. For more information contact Theater NOVA at (734) 635-8450, email a2theatrenova@gmail.com, or visit theatrenova.org.

Writing and Poetry

Crazy Wisdom Poetry Workshop with Edward Moring, David Jibson, & Lisa Perrin • Wednesday, December 10 • Informal writers' workshop. All welcome. Participants read the draft of a poem or short fiction for positive, constructive comments by peers. Workshops are held online via Zoom. For more information contact cwpoetrycircle@gmail.com or visit cwcircle.poetry.blog.

Yoga

Yoga with David Black • Ongoing Tuesdays • 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. • Beginning and experienced students in the classes learn traditional yoga postures (hatha yoga) with an emphasis on relaxation, concentration, and working with the breath. Classes fill up quickly, so early registration is necessary; semester begins September 9. $12 per session. For more information contact the Zen Buddhist Temple at (734) 761-6520 or email annarborzentemple@gmail.com.

Yoga for Athletes & More with Yoga House Ann Arbor • Ongoing Wednesdays • 6 to 7:30 p.m. • Anyone looking for a strong practice will enjoy increasing core strength, enhancing flexibility, agility, balance, and mental focus with this fun and energetic practice. For more information visit yogahouseannarbor.com.

Wild Goose Qigong with Master Wasentha Young • Ongoing Tuesdays from 6 to 7:00 p.m. AND/OR Thursdays 10 to 11:00 a.m. • The Wild Goose Qigong Form—continuous movement using imagery, yogic like stretching, touching acu-points, and engaging with universe, nature, and earth energies. Come Tuesdays (hybrid) and/or Thursdays (in-person) same price. Not wheelchair accessible. $225 for semester; begins September 9. For more information contact the Peaceful Dragon School at (734) 741-0695, email info@peacefuldragonschool.com, or visit peacefuldragonschool.com.

Yoga Stretch with Samantha Lieberman • Ongoing Thursdays • 10:20 to 11:20 a.m. • A full-body reset with intentional stretching to release tension and move with more freedom. Drop-in $18 per session. 10% senior discount. Packages for yoga programs are available. Cash or Venmo at the door. Bring your own mats. For more information contact Jewel Heart at (734) 994-3387, email programs@jewelheart.org, or visit jewelheart.org.

Gentle Flow Yoga with Caitie Shaughnessy • Monday, December 1, 8, 15, 22, & 29 • 11 a.m. to Noon • Gentle Flow Yoga is the perfect experience for anyone who enjoys yoga and would like a gentle to moderate level of challenge. The class incorporates breath work, standing flow sequences, prone and supine work, and different anatomical areas of focused support as well. $26 per class or class package available. For more information contact Imagine Fitness and Yoga at (734) 622-8119 or email imagine@imaginefitnessandyoga.com.

Ashtanga with Sandra Allen • Tuesday, December 2, 9, 16, 23, & 30 • 9 to 10:00 a.m. • Ashtanga yoga is a regimented series of asanas "postures" that are connected to the breath. The focus in this class is the first half of the primary series. Students may advance or modify as guided by the instructor. Ashtanga is foundational for any yoga class for proper alignment and strengthening. Set an intention to challenge yourself. $26 per class or class package available. For more information contact Imagine Fitness and Yoga at (734) 622-8119 or email imagine@imaginefitnessandyoga.com.

Yoga Essentials with Laurie Dean • Tuesday, , December 2, 9, 16, 23, & 30 • 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. • Participants will learn the building blocks of yoga practice. These classes are great for beginning and intermediate level practitioners looking to establish good form, balance, and flow in their practice. Your instructor will lead you through basic and gentle standing and seated poses and you will learn about the healing benefits of Yoga. $26 per class or class package available. For more information contact Imagine Fitness and Yoga at (734) 622-8119 or email imagine@imaginefitnessandyoga.com.

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Gateway Farm Seeks New Owners to Protect Beloved Community Green Space

Gateway Farm, a certified organic farm in Plymouth, Michigan, has been serving the region for nearly a decade. Its current owner is retiring, and new ownership must provide payment in earnest by December 31 to keep the farm operating. Without it, Gateway Farm will close.

For years, Gateway Farm has been a trusted place to access fresh organic food and connect with nature. Through its farmstand, CSA program, seasonal events, volunteer opportunities, and hands-on education, the farm has welcomed thousands of families, students, chefs, and neighbors. It supplies top quality organic produce to local households, hosts school visits and children's camps, supports vocational programs for adults with disabilities, trains and builds skills of dozens of staff and volunteers each year, while bringing the community together for farm-to-table dinners, markets, and wellness classes.

As one of the few remaining organic green spaces in a rapidly developing area, Gateway Farm also plays a crucial ecological role. Its growing methods support soil health, nurture wildlife, and keep nutrient-dense food accessible close to home. "Gateway Farm has always been about more than food," the team shared. "It's a place where people slow down, learn together, support one another, and feel connected to the land. Seeing a child pull a carrot from the soil for the first time or watching neighbors gather for a shared meal reminds us why farms like this matter."

Bridget O'Brien, Co-Director of Gateway Farm, spoke to the urgency of the moment. "I'm fearful that we could lose something irreplaceable, and at the same time deeply hopeful," O'Brien said. "The community interest and support coming forward gives us real reason to believe in a new future for the farm."

Co-Director Dr. Charlie Brennan highlighted the legacy already created. "The work that has happened here has been exceptional," Brennan said. "The learning, the shared moments, the sense of belonging — these are things most people never get to experience at this scale. We very much hope the farm can continue to serve future generations."

O'Brien noted that the farm is also well-positioned for a strong financial future. "We're already three years into a five-year path to profitability," she explained. "With modest short-term investment, the farm is positioned to thrive — and even expand into an on-site farm to table restaurant, event space, and animal sanctuary." Gateway Farm exists today thanks to the vision and generosity of its current owner, Mary Emmet, and the Emmet family, whose belief in the mission made nearly ten years of community impact possible.

The search is now underway for mission-aligned owners who can continue this work and help the farm grow into its next chapter. Gateway Farm has an experienced team and directors in place, ensuring continuity for current programs and day-to-day operations.

A short video overview of Gateway Farm can be found at www.gatewayfarmplymouth.com/invest

For inquiries, proposals, interviews, photos, or farm visits, please contact:
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Where can you pick up a copy of The Crazy Wisdom Community Journal?

You can find The Crazy Wisdom Community Journal in many places around Ann Arbor and in surrounding areas. Here'a a sampling of places around town where you can grab a copy of the current issue:

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Community Farm of Ann Arbor
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Now delivering to spots in Brighton, South Lyon, and Royal Oak too!

December is a month of invitation to forget ourselves in the service of others

- Robert Louis Stevenson